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Does employees' perception of participation in work-related decision-making affect employees' work engagement?

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A B S T R A C T

This study explored the impact of employee participation in decision-making on work engagement. A comprehensive literature review was conducted to better understand the concept. The research focused on the employees of the institution, with data collected through questionnaires. Both descriptive and inferential statistics were employed to analyze the results. The findings revealed that while both employee participation in decision-making and work engagement were high, the Pearson r correlation showed no significant relationship between the two variables, leading to the rejection of the hypothesis. The study acknowledges its limitations, including a small sample size and the limited set of variables measured. Further research is recommended to expand the sample size and explore additional factors that may influence work engagement.

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Introduction

The success of an organization is driven by the active participation of all its members in various activities and programs. Nothing can be achieved without the involvement of every member. Therefore, organizational performance is not solely attributed to the leader or manager but is instead a collective effort, with the team serving as a key determinant of success (Griffith & Dunham, 2017). This underscores the argument that

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participation in decision-making is essential for all organizational members. Employee participation in decision-making yields numerous positive outcomes. On one hand, Chang and Lorenzi (1983) highlighted that such participation positively impacts morale and productivity. This finding is also supported by Ugwu (2019), whose study explored the relationship between employee participation in decision-making and performance. Participation enables employees to contribute ideas, leading to better decision-making (Williamson, 2008), and fosters trust and a sense of autonomy (Chang & Lorenzi, 1983). Conversely, the lack of employee involvement in decision-making can result in job dissatisfaction, diminished organizational commitment, and decreased productivity (Helen, 2019).

Allowing employees to participate in decision-making signals that management trusts their capabilities and values their contributions to organizational growth. Kumar and Saha (2017) suggested that management should foster trust and actively involve employees in decision-making, valuing their input on various work-related matters. In line with this, Spicer (2020) and Child (2021) called for a reassessment of employee participation within organizations. They recommended the redefinition of participation structures and mechanisms that facilitate this involvement. This is crucial, as employee participation positively impacts the organization, potentially enhancing job satisfaction. Despite these benefits, many employees still report limited opportunities to engage in decision-making, even when such decisions directly affect their work (Rolkova & Farkasova, 2015). For instance, Gilbert (1988) conducted a survey on employees' participation in decision-making, and found that, out of 15 respondents, 13 reported no participation. Similarly, Ali et al. (1992) conducted a study in developing countries and found that many managers were reluctant to involve employees in decision-making. These studies underscore that employee participation remains a significant issue in organizations that requires attention.

Research on employee participation in decision-making within universities and colleges is relatively scarce. These institutions are typically highly structured, often governed by an organizational chart that delineates decision-making authority. As a result, only a select few have decision-making power, while employees are confined to roles defined by their job descriptions. This study seeks to examine employees' perceptions of their decision-making power and its impact on their work engagement. The study is organized into five sections. The first part introduces the background and objectives of the study. The second part provides a literature review, outlining the theoretical framework based on existing research. The third part details the research methodology, including the research design, population, locale, procedures, instruments, ethical considerations, and statistical methods used to analyze the data.

Literature review

This section reviews the literature relevant to the current topic, providing a theoretical foundation for the study. The concepts and theories are organized and presented thematically.

Participative management

The theory behind employees' participation in decision-making is rooted in participative management, which is grounded in the definition of management itself. One of the earliest definitions of management comes from Mary Parker Follett (1941), who described it as "the art of getting things done through people." Her definition is based on the belief that employees are more engaged, productive, and satisfied when treated as intelligent individuals and given opportunities to participate in decision-making. She rejected the compartmentalization of ideas, particularly in management, and instead advocated for a lateral and creative approach to problem-solving (Graham, 1995; Tonn, 2003). Similarly, Koontz (1961) defined management as "an art of getting things done

through and with people in formally organized groups." He emphasized the importance of creating an environment where employees can perform effectively and collaborate toward achieving organizational goals. Koontz (1961) further argued that this process is universal, regardless of the type of organization.

Participative management is not a new concept; discussions and studies on the subject date back more than 60 years. Some of the earliest studies include those by Lewin et al. (1939), Coch and French (1948), and Likert (1967). It is widely recognized as one of the most effective management and leadership styles (Likert, 1967; Yukl, 2010). The philosophy behind participative management is rooted in a belief in the capabilities of organizational members and the value of leveraging their diverse perspectives for organizational development (Maritz, 1995). Maisela (1995) described participative management as a proactive approach that seeks employee input in solving work-related issues. Marchant (1982) emphasized that it reflects management's confidence and trust in employees, as well as a willingness to share decision- making authority. In simple terms, Rolkováa and Farkašová (2014), Huang et al. (2010), and Bass and Bass (2008) defined participative management as a system of "encouraging and involving employees in the decision-making process." However, the definition of participative management remains somewhat ambiguous, as different authors conceptualize it in various ways (Sashkin, 1984). To clarify, Sashkin (1984) proposed that any definition should consider the different forms of participation, which include participation in setting goals, making decisions, solving work-related problems, and implementing organizational changes.

In relation to the present study, participative management specifically refers to employees' involvement in solving work-related problems (Sashkin, 1984). It focuses on a leader's ability to motivate and encourage employees to take responsibility and actively participate in workplace decision-making (Somech, 2006; Huang et al., 2010; Sauer, 2011; Rolkováa & Farkašová, 2015). As Yukl (2010) argued, participative management is a leadership capability that fosters employee involvement in critical decision- making and represents a form of power-sharing between leaders and employees.

Numerous studies have examined the impact of participative management on organizational performance, consistently demonstrating a positive effect. For instance, Huang (2011) found that participative management leads to behavioral improvements, including reduced absenteeism and increased organizational effectiveness. These findings align with earlier research by O'Brien (1988), which suggested that participative management enhances teacher satisfaction even during periods of organizational decline. By reducing absenteeism and increasing job satisfaction, participative management ultimately boosts productivity and overall organizational performance. This conclusion is further supported by studies conducted by Park et al. (2015), Kashani and Shahsavarani (2015), and Khassawneh and Elrehail (2022), all of which indicate that employee participation in organizational management positively influences both organizational and individual work performance.

Forms of decision-making participation

Facing the challenges of a dynamic environment, management must adapt its leadership and management style. One cannot face challenges alone; teamwork is essential. Management must operate as a team and treat employees as team members and contributors. This necessitates a flexible organizational structure that fosters participation at all levels, particularly in decision-making. Participative management and decision-making reflect an employer's recognition of and trust in employees. Employers believe that employees possess valuable knowledge and skills that contribute to organizational success and development (Rima'a, 2020). Participative management is, therefore, demonstrated through participative decision-making.

Participation in decision-making is defined as "the opportunity for an employee to provide input into the

decision-making process related to work matters" (Zanoni & Janssen, 2007) or organizational issues, particularly when employees have a say in promoting new strategic ideas. It is also understood as an opportunity for employees to contribute to decision-making on work-related concerns (Valverde, 2023). As a management strategy, it accommodates employees' perspectives on organizational issues, recognizing that employees are more likely to commit to their work and perform well when their contributions are valued in decisions that affect them (Elele & Fields, 2010). Kalleberg et al. (2009) define participation as "allowing employees to make decisions about their jobs and working conditions." Similarly, Heller et al. (2004) describe it as "a process that enables employees to exert some influence over their work and the conditions under which they work." Other scholars conceptualize participation as varying in degree—from limited interaction and information dissemination to full empowerment, where individuals or communities are actively involved in decision-making (Arnstein, 1969; Pateman, 1976; Wilkinson & Dundon, 2010).

Researchers have identified various forms of participation in decision-making, though different authors categorize them differently. Marchington and Wilkinson (2005) classify participative decision-making into four dimensions: degree, form, level, and scope. The degree of involvement determines whether employees are merely consulted, directly involved, or actively influence decisions. This reflects how much power employees have in shaping the decision-making process and outcomes. The form of participation refers to representation—employees may not be directly involved in decision-making but participate through labor union representatives or other representative mechanisms (Markey & Townsend, 2013). The level of participation indicates whether decision-making occurs at the individual, group, or departmental level (Marchington & Wilkinson, 2005). Finally, the scope of participation distinguishes between operational concerns, which focus on work practices, and strategic concerns, which involve broader organizational goals.

White (1996) identifies four distinct forms of participation: nominal, instrumental, representative, and transformative. Nominal participation is symbolic, involving individuals in decision-making processes without granting them real influence—often used for legitimacy rather than genuine inclusion. Instrumental participation involves engaging the community to achieve specific objectives by leveraging their skills and knowledge. Representative participation ensures that community members have a voice through elected or appointed representatives. Transformative participation empowers individuals to challenge structures and institutions that contribute to marginalization and exclusion (Tisdal, 2013).

Similarly, Arnstein (1969) classifies participation into three categories: nonparticipation, tokenism, and citizen power. Nonparticipation occurs when authoritarian leaders impose their agenda without considering community input. Tokenism allows people to provide feedback, but powerholders ultimately disregard their suggestions, rendering their participation inconsequential. Citizen power, on the other hand, grants individuals a meaningful role in decision-making, allowing them to influence outcomes and alter the status quo.

In the context of this discussion, participative decision-making refers to operational participation, where employees are actively involved in decisions related to their jobs and working conditions (Kalleberg et al., 2009). Miller (2012) and Carmeli (2009) further support this by arguing that employee participation reflects the extent to which employees can express their ideas about organizational activities and contribute to decision-making. This participation occurs when management grants employees autonomy and freedom to make decisions regarding their work, schedules, and conditions. Such autonomy fosters creativity and enhances performance (Sia & Appu, 2015).

The effect of participation in decision-making on performance

Although allowing all members of an organization to participate in decision-making may be challenging, particularly in large organizations, this should not be used as a reason to exclude employees from the process. Employee participation in decision-making is an employer-driven initiative, making managers key promoters of such engagement (Valverde, 2021). According to Wohlgemuth et al. (2019), managers can facilitate participation through both trust and informal control. Therefore, there should be some form, degree, or level of participation in which employees contribute to decisions that directly affect their work (Marchington & Wilkinson, 2005).

Excluding employees from decision-making can negatively impact their trust, sense of control, and productivity (Chang & Lorenzi, 1983). Conversely, involving employees in the process can lead to better decision-making outcomes (Williamson, 2008). Employee participation can also reduce monitoring costs (Arthur, 1994; Spreitzer & Mishra, 1999) while fostering diverse perspectives and viewpoints (Kemelgor, 2002). Furthermore, Noah (2008) noted that allowing employees to participate in decision-making can improve communication between management and employees.

Beyond these benefits, employee participation in decision-making has been linked to various positive organizational outcomes. Zivkovic et al. (2009) highlighted that involving employees in the planning process can drive innovation and recognition within the organization, ultimately enhancing organizational performance (Witte, 1980; Sagie & Aycon, 2003; Kuye & Sulaimon, 2011; Sikanyika & Chibomba, 2020; Ojokuku, 2014; Chimaobi & Chikamnele, 2020). Since organizational performance is the collective result of individual performance, allowing employees to engage in decision-making can enhance their creativity and work performance, which, in turn, contributes to overall firm performance (Olantuji et al., 2017). Landry (2020) further emphasized that involving employees in decision-making encourages valuable ideas and solutions that improve systems and processes. Additionally, employee participation can influence job satisfaction, which subsequently enhances job performance (Mohsen & Sharif, 2020). Beyond improving job performance, participation can also foster positive changes in employees' attitudes (Pereira & Osburn, 2007).

Work engagement and its effect on performance

Organizational performance is not solely an outcome of individual work performance and job satisfaction; it is also a result of work engagement (Macey & Schneider, 2008; Lee & Huang, 2019; De Carlo et al., 2020). This dimension of work is one that managers must actively cultivate. As highlighted by Ariza-Montes et al. (2018), Basinka and Daderman (2019), and Langseth-Eide (2019), managers play a crucial role in motivating employees to invest their resources into their work.

Kahn (1990) defined work engagement as "the degree to which a person shows self-preference in job tasks to promote connections between self and job, which can increase role performance through cognitive, emotional, and physical self-investment." Based on this definition, work engagement is not a singular construct but a multidimensional one, comprising cognitive engagement, emotional engagement, and physical engagement. These dimensions are also reflected in the definition provided by Bakker and Leiter (2010), who described work engagement as "a positive, fulfilling, affective-motivational state of work- related well-being that can be seen as the antipode of job burnout" (Bakker & Leiter, 2010, pp. 1-2). Bakker, Schaufeli, Leiter, and Tarris (2008) further argued that engaged employees exhibit high energy levels and perform their work with enthusiasm. Engagement is characterized by vigor and a strong identification with one’s work.

A high level of vigor toward one's work consistently translates into positive work outcomes. Numerous studies have examined the impact of work engagement on performance, particularly individual work performance and overall organizational performance, yielding similar findings. For instance, Tanwar (2017) suggested that employee engagement predicts productivity, profitability, customer satisfaction, customer loyalty, and lower employee turnover and absenteeism. Similarly, Anitha (2014) emphasized that work engagement is a major contributor to individual work performance and identified its key driving factors as the work environment, teamwork, and workplace relationships. She recommended that management foster a positive work environment that promotes collaboration and strong working relationships.

Dajani (2015) further confirmed that work engagement enhances both job performance and organizational commitment. Additionally, a report from Harvard Business Review Analytic Services (2017) found that approximately 71% of employees recognized engagement as a critical factor in organizational performance, while 72% cited employee recognition as a key driver of engagement. The report specifically highlighted the influence of work engagement on customer service, executive leadership, communication, productivity, quality improvement, innovation, and sales and marketing performance. Key drivers of engagement include recognition for high performers, employees having a clear understanding of their job's contribution to organizational strategy, continuous communication from senior leadership, alignment of individual goals with corporate objectives, performance reviews linked to company-wide goals, and training and development programs structured around these objectives (Harvard Business Review, 2017).

Conceptual framework

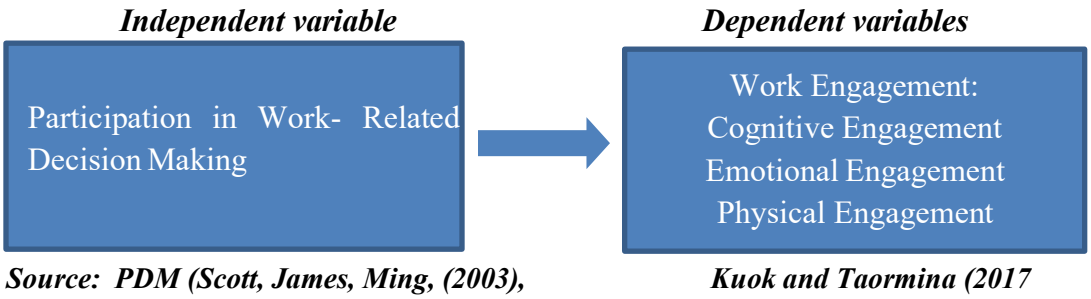

Figure 1: The conceptual frameworks explain the effect of participation in decision-making on work engagement along with cognitive, affective and physical engagement.

Statement of the problems

The study measured the effect of employees' participation in decision-making on work engagement. It specifically answered the following questions:

1. **What is the employees' participation in work-related decision-making?**

2. **What is the work engagement of employees in terms of:**
   a. **cognitive engagement**
   b. **Affective engagement**
   c. **Physical engagement**

3. **Is there a relationship between employees' participation in decision-making and work engagement?**

Assumptions

The study assumes that participation in decisions influences employees' performance and work engagement.

Hypothesis

Employees' participation in decision-making reflects management's recognition and appreciation of their contributions toward organizational improvement. This involvement fosters a sense of expertise rather than mechanistic labor among employees. Research has shown that employee participation significantly influences both individual and organizational performance (Chimaobi & Chikamnele, 2020; Chekole, 2021; Ojokuku, 2014).

Scope and delimitation of the study

The study focuses on employees' participation in work-related decision-making, with respondents limited to the employees of Divine Word College of Laoag.

Research methodology

The study adopted a quantitative research approach and employed a descriptive-correlational research design to assess the level of leadership competency among administrators and its impact on employee work engagement. Descriptive research was used to provide a detailed analysis of data collected through questionnaires, which were then examined using statistical techniques. This approach is particularly useful for describing the characteristics of individuals, situations, phenomena, or relationships between variables. Fundamentally, descriptive research provides insights into "what is" within the data (Ariola, 2006, as cited by Abun, 2019). The study utilized both descriptive assessment and correlational methods to evaluate leadership competency levels and their effect on work engagement.

Locale of the study

The locale of the study was Divine Word Colleges of Laoag, Laoag City, Ilocos Norte.

Population

The study was conducted with the participation of all 176 employees and faculty members of Divine Word College of Laoag, Ilocos Norte, using complete enumeration sampling.

Data gathering procedures

The researcher obtained permission from the colleges' presidents to administer the questionnaires to students. Meetings were conducted with the presidents and students to personally request their participation. The retrieval of the questionnaires was coordinated between the presidents' representatives and the researcher, with the support of college employees and faculty.

Data gathering instruments

The study utilized questionnaires to collect data, adopting the Participation in Decision-Making (PDM) scale from Scott et al. (2003) and the work engagement scale from Kuok and Taormina (2017).

Ethical review

The research was submitted to the ethical review committee, which waived the review as the study did not

involve vulnerable populations or sensitive data.

Statistical treatment of data

Given the study's descriptive and correlational research design, both descriptive and inferential statistical methods were applied. Descriptive statistics, specifically the weighted mean, were used to assess the levels of participation in decision-making and work engagement. Pearson's r was employed to analyze the correlation between these two variables.

The following ranges of values with their descriptive interpretation were used:

Statistical Range	***Descriptive Interpretation***
4.21-5.00	*Strongly Agree/Very High*
3.41-4.20	*Agree/High*
2.61-3.40	*Somewhat Agree/Moderate*
1.81-2.60	*Disagree/Low*
1.00-1.80	*Strongly Disagree/Very Low*

Data presentation and analysis

The data are presented according to the problems of the study.

Problem 1: What is the employees' participation in work-related decision-making?

Table 1: Employees' participation in work-related decision making

Indicators	**Mean**	**DR**
1. In general, I have a say or influence on how I perform my job	3.75	A
2. I can decide on how to do my job	3.83	A
3. In general, I have a say or influence on what goes on in my work group	3.60	A
4. In general, I have a say or influence on decisions which affect my job.	3.56	A
5. My supervisors are receptive and listen to my ideas and suggestions	3.79	A
Composite Mean	**3.71**	**A**

***PDM (Scott, et al, (2003*)

Legend:

Statistical Range	***Descriptive Interpretation***
4.21-5.00	*Strongly Agree/Very High*
3.41-4.20	*Agree/High*
2.61-3.40	*Somewhat Agree/Moderate*
1.81-2.60	*Disagree/Low*
1.00-1.80	*Strongly Disagree/Very Low*

The employees' participation in work-related decision-making received a composite mean rating of 3.71, interpreted as "agree/high." This rating suggests that while participation is not extremely high, it is also not moderate, low, or very low—it falls within the high range. Even when analyzed individually, all indicators remained within the same "agree/high" category. Employees acknowledge that they have influence over how they perform their work and agree that their employers are receptive to their suggestions and ideas.

A high level of participation in decision-making signifies that employees are actively involved in the process, whether formally or informally, individually or in groups. Such involvement enhances employee engagement, fosters collaboration, and improves communication (Landry, 2020). Furthermore, it supports the promotion of organizational democratic values, such as equity and shared responsibility in decision- making (Valoyi et al., 2000).

Problem 2: What is the work engagement of employees in terms of:

- ***a. Cognitive engagement***
- ***b. Affective engagement***
- ***c. Physical engagement***

Table 2*: *Work engagement of employees in terms of cognitive engagement

	Indicators	Mean	DR
1	1. My mind is often full of ideas about my work	3.81	A
2	Wherever I am, things happen that often remind me of my work	3.77	A
3	My mind is fully engaged with my work	3.86	A
4	I rarely think about a time when I am working	3.78	A
5	My thoughts are fully focused when thinking about my work	3.88	A
6	I give a lot of mental attention to my work	3.91	A
Composite Mean		**3.83**	**A**

Source: *Kuok and Taormina (2017)*

Employee cognitive engagement plays a crucial role in workplace productivity and overall organizational success. It reflects the extent to which employees are mentally immersed in their tasks, actively processing information, and demonstrating a strong commitment to their work. In this study, cognitive engagement among employees was assessed, and the results indicate a high level of involvement.

Specifically, the findings reveal that employees' cognitive engagement received a composite mean rating of 3.83, interpreted as "agree/high." This suggests that while engagement is not extremely high, it is also not moderate, low, or very low—it remains consistently high. Even when analyzed individually, all indicators fall within the same high-level rating. Employees generally agree that they are highly engaged cognitively, meaning their minds are fully immersed in their work.

A high level of cognitive engagement signifies that employees are deeply focused on their tasks, actively thinking through their work, and demonstrating strong involvement and concentration (Huang et al., 2022). It also reflects their capability and willingness to take on their responsibilities (Rotgans & Schmidt, 2011). Researchers have emphasized that high cognitive engagement enhances employee performance, arguing that an organization's success stems from the enthusiasm and passion of its employees (Kodden, 2020; Sypniewska et al., 2023).

Table 3: ***Work Engagement of Employees in terms of affective engagement***

	Indicators	Mean	DR
1	1. I feel very delighted about what I am doing whenever I am working	3.69	A
2	I am very eager to do my work	3.74	A
3	I feel very happy when I am carrying out my responsibilities at work.	3.67	A

4	I feel very good about the work that I do.	3.73	A
5	I feel strong enthusiasm for my work.	3.71	A
6	I feel a sense of gratification from my work performance	3.75	A
	Composite Mean	**3.71**	**H**

Kuok and Taormina (2017)

Affective engagement is a key component of overall work engagement, reflecting the emotional connection employees have with their work. It encompasses enthusiasm, happiness, and a sense of fulfillment derived from job responsibilities. In this study, affective engagement among employees was examined, and the findings indicate a consistently high level of emotional investment in their work.

The results show that employees' affective engagement received a composite mean rating of 3.71, interpreted as "agree/high." This suggests that while engagement is not extremely high, it is also not moderate, low, or very low—it remains at a consistently high level. Even when the indicators are assessed individually, all items are rated within the same high-level mean rating. Employees strongly agree that they experience happiness in their work, feel enthusiastic about their tasks, and find gratification in their responsibilities.

A high level of affective work engagement indicates that employees have a deep emotional connection with their work and are intrinsically motivated to perform well (Celestin et al., 2024). It also reflects a high degree of energy, enthusiasm, and immersion in tasks, often characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption (Steger et al., 2013). Additionally, high affective engagement is associated with job satisfaction (Sypniewska et al., 2023) and may contribute to lower turnover rates, as employees with strong emotional ties to their work are less likely to leave their jobs (Neuber et al., 2021).

Table 4: ***Work engagement of employees in terms of physical engagement***

	Indicators	**Mean**	**DR**
1	No matter how much I work, I have a high level of energy	3.70	A
2	I have a great deal of stamina for my work.	3.77	A
3	I always have a lot of energy for my work	3.77	A
4	I am often physically driven by my work	3.80	A
5	I am frequently energized by my work.	3.81	A
6	I find my work to be physically invigorating	3.72	A
	Composite Mean	**3.76**	**H**

Kuok and Taormina (2017)

Physical engagement is a crucial dimension of overall work engagement, reflecting the extent to which employees invest energy and effort into their tasks. It encompasses stamina, resilience, and the physical drive to perform work-related activities. In this study, physical engagement among employees was examined, and the findings highlight a consistently high level of commitment to their work.

The results indicate that employees' physical engagement received a composite mean rating of 3.76, interpreted as "agree/high." This suggests that while engagement is not extremely high, it is also not moderate, low, or very low—it remains at a consistently high level. Even when the indicators are considered separately, all items are rated within the same high-level mean rating. Employees strongly agree that they maintain a high level of energy regardless of workload and find their work physically invigorating.

A high level of physical work engagement reflects the amount of physical and mental effort employees invest in their tasks (Huang et al., 2022). It also signifies their active participation and involvement in work-related physical activities (Grubert et al., 2022), which in turn contributes to enhanced job performance (Nyikuli et al., 2018).

Table 5: Summary of Work engagement

	Indicators	Mean	DR
1	Cognitive Engagement	3.83	A
2	Affective Engagement	3.71	A
3	Physical Engagement	3.76	A
Overall Mean		**3.77**	**A**

Kuok and Taormina (2017)

Work engagement is a critical factor in employee productivity and organizational success, encompassing cognitive, affective, and physical dimensions. It reflects the extent to which employees are mentally focused, emotionally connected, and physically invested in their work. Understanding the overall level of work engagement provides insight into employees' commitment and motivation within the workplace.

The findings of this study indicate that employees' overall work engagement received a mean rating of 3.77, which is interpreted as high. This suggests that while engagement is not extremely high, it is also not moderate, low, or very low—it remains consistently high across all dimensions. Even when cognitive, affective, and physical engagement are assessed separately, each dimension maintains the same high level of mean rating. Employees strongly agree that they are mentally focused, emotionally invested, and physically energized in their work.

High levels of work engagement are consistently linked to improved job performance (Boxall & Macky, 2010; Motyka, 2018), reinforcing the importance of fostering engagement in the workplace to enhance productivity and organizational effectiveness.

Problem 3: Is there a relationship between employees' participation in decision-making and work engagement?

Table 5: ***Relationship between Employees' participation in decision-making and work engagement***

		Cognitive Engagement	*Affective Engagement*	*Physical Engagement*	*Work Engagement as a whole*
Employees' participation in decision-making	Pearson's r	-0.137	-0.059	-0.073	-0.101
	df	161	161	161	161
	p-value	0.081	0.453	0.358	0.198

Source: SPSS

The correlational analysis reveals a striking result: employees' participation in decision-making does not significantly influence their level of work engagement ($r = -.10$, $p > .05$), failing to support the hypothesis. This suggests that regardless of their involvement in decision-making, employees maintain high cognitive, affective, and physical engagement in their work. Their commitment remains intact, demonstrating that engagement is driven by factors beyond participatory decision-making.

Interestingly, this finding contradicts previous research that identified a positive correlation between decision-making participation and work commitment (Ogu, 2024). This divergence underscores the importance of context in shaping workplace dynamics. Work engagement is not a universal response to decision-making opportunities; instead, it is shaped by a complex interplay of organizational culture, job demands, leadership style, and work climate (Rick et al., 2024; van Zyl et al., 2019). These results emphasize the need to consider broader workplace conditions when assessing the factors that sustain employee engagement.

Discussion

The findings of this study open an important discussion on the role of employees' participation in decision-making and its relationship with work engagement. While the results indicate that both participation in decision-making and work engagement are high, they reveal no significant correlation between the two.

This suggests that high work engagement is not necessarily a direct outcome of employees' involvement in decision-making.

This finding stands in contrast to previous research, which consistently reports that employees who participate in decision-making tend to feel more committed, engaged, and enthusiastic about their work (Ogu, 2024; Yorger et al., 2015; Appelbaum et al., 2013). The discrepancy underscores a crucial point— work engagement is not solely driven by decision-making participation but is shaped by broader workplace dynamics. Context matters. Organizational culture, leadership style, values, and the overall work environment play a defining role in how engaged employees feel (Rick et al., 2024; van Zyl et al., 2019).

From a practical standpoint, this has significant implications for management. While encouraging employees to participate in decision-making is valuable, it is not a standalone solution for fostering engagement. If the work environment is unsupportive—if leadership is weak, workplace relationships are strained, or organizational values are misaligned—it can erode motivation, satisfaction, and enthusiasm, regardless of decision-making opportunities (Lussa et al., 2023; Sawir & Abror, 2021; Abun et al., 2021). Therefore, fostering a holistic, positive work environment should be a priority alongside participatory decision-making to sustain high levels of employee engagement.

Conclusion

This study set out to explore whether employees' participation in decision-making influences their work engagement. The results reveal that while both participation in decision-making and work engagement are high, no significant correlation exists between the two. This challenges the common assumption that involvement in decision-making automatically drives engagement, suggesting instead that other workplace factors may play a more crucial role. As a result, the study's hypothesis is rejected.

However, these results should be viewed with consideration of the study's limitations, particularly the scope of the population and the variables examined. Work engagement is a complex phenomenon influenced by multiple factors beyond decision-making participation. Future research should expand the scope to include a broader population and explore other workplace dynamics—such as leadership styles, organizational culture, and job design—that may have a stronger impact on employee engagement. Understanding these influences can provide deeper insights into how organizations can cultivate a more engaged and motivated workforce.

Authors' contributions: All authors contribute to the study from the conceptualization, analysis, data gathering

and interpretation of data.

Conflict of interest statement: All authors have read and declare no conflict of interest to the manuscript to be published.

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Data availability statement: The data presented in this study are available on request from the corresponding author. Data are not publicly available due to privacy.

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